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Davis Announces Support for ConAgra Foods Expansion Project

PERU—Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis today announced state and local support for a multi-million dollar expansion project that will bring approximately 225 new jobs to the city of Peru.

ConAgra Foods, one of the nation's largest packaged food companies, will add approximately 80,000 square-feet to its bacon processing facility at 3311 State Road 19 S. in Peru and renovate parts of the present facility. The company's \$25 million investment in the facility will result in the creation of approximately 225 new jobs. The Peru plant presently has about 300 employees.

"The state of Indiana commends ConAgra Foods for making such a strong investment in its future, and in the future of its employees," said Davis, who leads the state's economic development efforts as director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. "As we look toward Indiana's economic future, we must prepare our state's workforce for increased productivity by supporting new initiatives to match qualified workers with business opportunities. ConAgra Foods is taking steps to secure 225 jobs, which is good news for Peru and our entire state."

Mike Fritz, plant manager of ConAgra Foods in Peru, Ind., said, "The Peru plant has been selected for expansion to meet demand for our pre-cooked bacon products. The facility is geographically well-positioned to serve the market areas that account for more than half of the total United States bacon consumption. When the remodeling and expansion is completed later this year, our Peru facility will be another of ConAgra Foods' world-class plants and our largest bacon processing facility. We're just now getting under way with the project, and we appreciate the state and local support we've received."

The Peru facility is part of ConAgra Foods' Refrigerated Foodservice unit and produces pre-cooked bacon products such as bacon slices, bits and chips for foodservice customers. ConAgra Foods Inc. is one of North America's largest packaged food companies, serving consumer grocery retailers as well as restaurants and other foodservice establishments.

Popular ConAgra Foods consumer brands include ACT II, Armour, Banquet, Blue Bonnet, Brown 'N Serve, Butterball, Chef Boyardee, Cook's, Crunch 'n Munch, DAVID, Decker, Eckrich, Egg Beaters, Fleischmann's, Gulden's, Healthy Choice, Hebrew National, Hunt's, Kid Cuisine, Knott's Berry Farm, La Choy, Lamb Weston, Libby's, Lightlife, Lunch Makers, MaMa Rosa's, Manwich, Marie Callender's, Orville Redenbacher's, PAM, Parkay, Pemmican, Peter Pan, Reddi-wip, Rosarita, Ro*Tel, Slim Jim, Snack Pack, Swiss Miss, Van Camp's, Wesson, Wolf and many others.

"The city of Peru looks forward to working with ConAgra Foods as they continue to grow in our community," said Peru Mayor James Walker. "We appreciate the cooperation from the Indiana Department of Commerce, which allowed us to put this deal together."

To help secure the project, the state of Indiana, Miami County and the city of Peru worked together to offer a host of economic incentives. The Indiana Department of Commerce has offered tax credits through the Economic Development for a Growing Economy and the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit programs, as well as grants from the Skills Enhancement Fund, Technology Enhancement Certification for Hoosiers Fund and Industrial Development Grant Fund.

Miami County has offered infrastructure and relocation assistance, and a 10-year tax abatement. The city of Peru also will provide infrastructure and relocation assistance. Peru Utilities is providing the engineering and construction management for the water supply to the plant.

"This project is an excellent example of state and local cooperation resulting in the addition of significant new manufacturing jobs to our local economy, said Gary Nielander, Peru economic development director. "This was a very competitive process, and the EDC, mayor, City Council, County Council and the Peru Municipal Utility worked long and hard together with ConAgra Foods and the Indiana Department of Commerce to structure a financial incentive package that brought this project to our community."

Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in transferable and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. The Technology Enhancement Certification for Hoosiers Fund helps companies train existing information technology professionals. Economic Development for a Growing Economy tax credits are based on payroll and are awarded to companies that may otherwise locate in another state or country. The Industrial Development Grant Fund provides assistance to local units of government for off-site infrastructure projects in support of new business development.

Companies interested in learning more about these or other Commerce programs should contact their regional Commerce office at 800.280.0584 or access its Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.